

**in Jesus Christ**

Matthew 11:25-30

March 5, 2017

Are you tired? Are you tired from carrying heavy loads?

Are you tired from carrying a load of worry? Worry about your children? Worry about getting old? Worry about money? Worry about your health?

Or maybe you worry about bigger things. Are you tired, are you weighed down with worry about our nation's future? About our church's future? About this world's future? Do you worry about people who suffer -- refugees, undocumented immigrants, victims of crime, victims of war, victims of abuse, people with mental illness, people with cancer? People you are powerless to help? People the world seems powerless to help, if it even cares?

Are you tired from carrying a load of responsibility? So much on your plate? So many depending on you? Day after day, week after week, year after year. No rest for the weary.

Are you tired from carrying a load of guilt? Knowing you could do better? Knowing you should do better? Are you weighed down by regret for the mistakes you have made, for the people you have let down, for the people you have hurt? Do you bear the burden of knowing you could do more, knowing you could be more, but that you lack the courage, the will, the desire, the confidence?

Are you tired from carrying a load of anger? Anger at intolerance? Anger at bigotry? Anger at selfishness? Anger at arrogance? Are you flush with anger against people who speak lies? Against leaders who are plain mean-spirited? Against politicians, of both parties, for whom it all about winning and losing, not about justice, not about righteousness, not about serving the people?

Are you angry with people full of themselves? With people who don't listen? With people who don't care about you? With people who don't care about God? With people who don't care about anything?

Are you tired from carrying a load of doubt? I know you are here because you want to believe, because you want to believe there is a God who cares, a God who helps, a God who saves. I know you are here because you are not content with going your own way without a care for the bigger things: without a care for justice, for love, for your place in a world that is going somewhere.

But maybe the world doesn't seem to be going anywhere, at least not anywhere good. Maybe the weight of injustice and violence and senseless suffering is more than you can handle, more than you can in any way make sense of. Maybe it seems futile to try to make sense of it, to try even to make sense of your own life, other than living it as best you can for as long as you can and not worrying about all the rest.

Except that you can't stop worrying about all the rest and it weighs you down and it breaks your heart to think that there may be no larger meaning. You want to believe there is a God who cares, a God who helps, a God who saves, and it terrifies you to think that may not be.

Are you tired from carrying a load of shame? I don't mean the shame of having done something wrong, of being ashamed. I mean the shame of your smallness, your inadequacy, your insignificance, your mortality. Are you tired from bearing the burden of being what you are, a silly creature who lives but a few fleeting moments and then is gone, leaving hardly a trace behind to let anyone know, if they wanted to know, that you were here?

Are you tired? Are you tired from carrying these heavy loads?

*Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest ...*

Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus Christ and you will find rest.

Lay down your worry and rest!

*Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need ... and God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.*

Lay down your responsibility and rest!

*Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him.*

Lay down your guilt and rest!

*Because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do, we are all purified from sin by the offering that he made of his own body once and for all.*

Lay down your anger and rest!

*If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. Don't give the Devil a chance ... No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.*

Lay down your doubt and rest!

*I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.*

Lay down your shame and rest!

*You are God's children in union with Christ Jesus.*

*Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest ...*

It's not hard. It's not complicated. It's not more than you are capable of. You can do it. You can do it! You can come to Jesus. You can lay down your heavy loads. You can find rest.